

This will be the best bill in history for cycling, in no small measure due to the efforts of the ranking member, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR). There is a program for safe routes to schools so our children can bike and walk to school safely at a time when we are concerned about morbidly obese junior high students. The fact that most communities are finding fewer and fewer children can get to school safely on their own, these will be welcome additions indeed.

This is the time for the House of Representatives to do its job. We need to send a clear signal that we support investing in America's transportation future. We need to make sure that we protect the basic framework of the ISTEA legislation so that it enhances the choices that communities have and provides incentives to properly plan it.

It is important that we think of this as the beginning of the reauthorization for TEA-4 because this framework is going to provide a floor. It is going to provide direction not just for this next 6-year reauthorization but it will be the framework to launch what happens in the subsequent reauthorizations as well. We do not want to be 6 years from now in the place where we have an administration that is threatening to veto even a modestly sized piece of legislation for America's future.

I urge my colleagues to support a motion to recommit this bill to establish the \$318 billion threshold the same as the Senate. I look forward to a debate this week that will help move America's economic and environmental program forward.

REQUIRE OPEC TO FOLLOW THE LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the OPEC nations will meet to seal the deal on their collusion to restrict production of oil and drive up the price, damaging the U.S. economy, devastating U.S. consumers and other countries around the world.

Now, the Bush administration thus far has taken no action. Perhaps not too strange when you read about the long-enduring links between the Bush family and the rulers of Saudi Arabia, but still I would think in an election year we could at least get some modicum of action out of this administration.

Now Energy Secretary Abraham recently said the U.S. is not going to beg OPEC for oil. I agree. We should not beg. We should make them follow the law. This is an administration that is so big on the WTO and rules-based trade. I opposed the WTO. But when you are stuck in it, like we are, you ought to at least then use the rules that would be to the advantage of your people and your economy.

And the rules, there are rules in OPEC that prohibit what is being done in the WTO by the OPEC countries. There are 11 OPEC countries, six are members of the WTO, and two have applied to join. Therefore, since they are violating the rules of the WTO, the Bush administration should file a complaint.

It is quite easy to read. Article 11. "No prohibitions or restrictions other than duties, taxes, or other charges whether made effective through quotas, import or export licenses or other measures shall be instituted or maintained by any contracting party on the importation of any product of the territory of any other contracting party or on the exportation or sale for export of any product destined for the territory of any other contracting party."

Now that is legalese, but the bottom line it says is what those OPEC countries who are members of the WTO are doing to collude, to restrict production, to drive up the price of oil, to price-gouge Americans, violates the rules; and the Bush administration should file a complaint in the WTO on that issue.

I corresponded with the Bush administration last year. They came back after 6 months and said, well, there is an exclusion for a conservation of exhaustible natural resources. Well, that is true, except nobody in OPEC alleges that they are conserving exhaustible natural resources. They are very up front about it. They are trying to drive up the price. There is no conservation ethic there.

So that exclusion does not apply, particularly since the rules go on to say, disguised restrictions on international trade are prohibited. That is what this is. It is not a conservation exception.

So the Bush administration could use its favorite entity, the WTO, which it frequently uses for multinational corporations to enhance their profits, to degrade consumer protections, labor protections. They could use it now to protect the American economy, American consumers against price-gouging. They are not doing that, and one has to wonder why. I think it is because so they are so tight with the oil industry.

People say, wait a minute. The oil industry is buying oil. No, the oil industry has all these special deals with the OPEC countries. If the OPEC countries make big headlines and say they are rising the price of oil by 4 bucks a barrel, the oil industry applauds. Because what they then do is at the pump they raise it effectively 8 bucks a barrel; and then when American consumers, they complain, they point to OPEC and say we cannot do anything about it. It is those OPECers. They raised it. They raised it.

Well, if you look at the profits of the oil industry, they are up, phenomenal, yet the Republicans are proposing an energy bill that would subsidize the oil, gas, and coal industries, all of whom

are recognizing record profits. And they say that would be the solution.

Well, you are already subsidizing them by not taking action in the interest of the American people against the colluders, the price-fixers, at OPEC. There is no explanation for the inactivity of the Bush administration on this other than they are getting the support of that industry for their reelection. That is the only potential explanation of why they would abandon the American economy.

Because they are talking about the recovery is fragile, and it is just starting. Well, you heard from the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) earlier on that. There is not much of a recovery for most Americans. There is some recovery in profits, but with the outsourcing of jobs there are no new jobs here in the United States. But now they are sticking it to consumers and the few businesses that we have left that are trying to produce goods to export and every other business that is based in this country through these extortionate gasoline prices and the Bush administration has done nothing, zero, nada, zilch. Not one thing, not one action has been taken.

They are buying oil at these extortionate prices to put in the reserve, and they will not do anything about the high price. So they are gouging both taxpayers and consumers. It is a twofer for the Bush administration.

THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, later this week the House is on the verge of passing a \$2.3 trillion budget with a \$500 billion deficit, showing that it is impossible to finance three wars with three tax cuts.

This budget repeats the same mistakes that have resulted in a jobless economy and a wage recession here in America, with the lowest growth in wages in a period of economic growth ever in American history.

This budget continues the status quo economy, an administration that refuses to budge and change its failed policies that have led to nearly 3 million Americans unemployed since it has taken office, 43 million Americans who are working without health care, 4 additional million since they have taken office, 2 million Americans who moved from the middle class to poverty, nearly \$1 trillion worth of corporate individual bankruptcies and stagnant wages.

During the 2000 presidential campaign, President Bush declared that he opposed nation-building. Who knew it was America he was talking about. You would think if your results of your economic policies led to 3 or more million Americans without work, 43 million

Americans without health insurance, \$1 trillion dollars worth of foreclosed corporate assets, poverty rolls increasing, you would change direction. What are we about to do with this budget? Put our foot on the accelerator and do the same old thing that will result in the same policies.

In 3 years we have added \$3 trillion to the Nation's deficit, and nearly 3 million Americans have lost their jobs. Three wars, three tax cuts, \$500 billion in deficits. That has been the result of the economic policies of this administration; and this budget that we are going to vote on will continue the policies that have given America woefully inadequate services on health care, college education, jobs, retirement security, and also economic security.

This budget and the President's economic vision is really the tale of two budgets, one for America, one for Iraq. We have spent well over \$100 billion on Iraq's occupation but without promising the same future that we are promising the Iraqi children and families.

Let us just go through it.

When we talk about universal health care in Iraq and free job training to Iraqis, 44 million Americans go without health insurance and 8.2 million Americans are without jobs.

In the area of health care, 2,200 Iraqi health officials are being trained by the United States, and 8,000 volunteers in Iraq are receiving free training. In America, under the budget being proposed, we have cut health training funds by 64 percent here at home.

One hundred fifty clinics and hospitals in Iraq have been rebuilt, serving 3 million Iraqis. One hundred percent prenatal and infant coverage in Iraq. In America, community health clinics cut by 91 percent. Maternal and Child Health Care, Healthy Start, family planning, all frozen resulting from cuts in those budgets.

In the area of jobs, in Iraq \$60 million is being spent to train Iraqi veterans for past wars; and yet in this budget we gut veterans and veteran health care, resulting in every veterans organization opposing the budget we are going to vote on.

In the area of education in Iraq, we have built 2,300 schools for the Iraqi children but have underfunded Leave No Child Behind by \$8 billion here at home. Iraqi universities are getting \$20 million for higher ed partnerships. In America, we have cut \$91 million from the Perkins loans and frozen Pell Grants for college education.

In the area of police and security, \$470 billion is being spent, \$500 billion is being spent for Iraqi police. Yet the COPS, Community Police Program, \$659 million in this budget is cut from the police that we put on our streets here at home.

In the area of housing, \$470 million is being spent for Iraq public housing. Yet we have cut in this budget that the President proposes and the Republicans are going to vote on \$791 million from section 8 public housing vouchers.

In the area of environment, in Iraq, \$3.6 billion in waters and sewer improvement; in America, a \$500 million cut from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund that provides drinking water for every American.

In the area of ports, the Port of Umm Qasar in Iraq was completely rebuilt for economic development. The Army Corps of Engineers here in the United States, a 63 percent cut for port security upgrades.

Roads. We spent \$240 million on roads and bridges for the Iraqi infrastructure, and yet mass transit here in the United States in the budget will be frozen.

As the President seeks reelection he will be running on a pledge that he kept. He was opposed to nation-building, and he has kept his pledge. The problem is he is opposed to nation-building here at home in America. We can do it in Iraq, but we should not leave America behind.

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk briefly this morning about what is happening with Medicare. We are approaching a time when seniors will have an option for the transitional card that allows them to have immediate help with their prescription drug benefits.

At CMS they are working right now on a plan where seniors will be able to call in, talk about the drugs that they personally are taking, and for that 18 months or so of transition receive the help that they initially can get as we are putting this first major change since 1965 of Medicare into place.

Seniors across the country have been waiting for too long for Medicare to cover life-saving prescription drugs, not the fault of this House which for three Congresses now has tried to solve this problem and has voted to solve this problem.

In 1965, when President Johnson signed Medicare into law, prescription drugs were not a big part of health care. In 2003, President Bush understood that they had become a big part of health care. The Congress understood that as well, and we have strengthened that program for millions of seniors to be able to rely on new coverage in the future.

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For the first time in Medicare's history, a prescription drug benefit will be offered to all 40 million seniors and disabled Americans to help them afford the cost of their medicines. No senior has to take this benefit, no senior has to make a choice about changing their Medicare if they do not want to, but this offer is available to all seniors and, again, available to all who have

Medicare coverage because of a disability.

Americans of all ages can benefit from the creation of health savings accounts, which will give individuals more control over the cost of their health care and access to affordable, flexible coverage; and for the 888,126 beneficiaries in my State of Missouri who will have access to a Medicare prescription drug benefit for the first time in history, help is on the way.

In fact, 214,754 Missouri seniors will have drug coverage they otherwise would not have, and almost 270,000 beneficiaries in Missouri who have limited savings and low incomes, generally low income in that case would be for individuals with income below \$12,123 a year or for couples with income below \$16,232 a year, those individuals have even more benefits.

Initially, they get the card for free. They get \$600 of credit toward their drug bill on the card that they will receive this year and another \$600 next year. They will pay no premium when it comes time for the prescription drug coverage, if they opt to take that coverage; and they will be responsible only for a very small copayment, no more than \$2 for generic drugs, \$5 for brand-name drugs.

For people who have been struggling to pay for the drugs that their doctors told them they needed for their own health, this makes a huge difference in their ability now to have the kind of health care that they deserve, the kind of health care that is available, the kind of health care that will be covered under Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, all these numbers add up to savings. They add up to access to life-saving drugs. They add up to better health care for seniors of this country. This is a huge and important change.

I am pleased that this House could be part of it, that our friends on the other side of the building would join us and that the President signed this important legislation into law.

HONORING JOSEPH FORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to the life and the memory of a great American, Mr. Joseph Ford. Following a brief illness, Joe passed away on March 16. His death, a loss to us all.

As the veterans community in New Hampshire and throughout the Nation celebrates the life of this exceptional person, I would like to take an opportunity to honor a beloved New Hampshire resident.

Joe served our country valiantly in the United States Air Force and retired after more than 20 years of service. Following his service, Joe became an